

# Reviews by Amos Lassen

Books, Movies and Judaica and Random Thoughts About Whatever

## “GILA”— The Monster



**“Gila!”**

**The Monster**

**Amos Lassen**

Jim Wynorski based his movie “Gila” loosely on a science fiction classic from 1959, “Giant Gila the Monster”. In “Gila” we see a ferocious, rampaging giant Gila monster, classy hot rods, vintage 50’s rock ‘n roll music, cute co-eds, fist fights, drag racing and an all-star cast who rally to defend their small town.

The movie follows a small-town Sheriff and a young hot-rod mechanic as they suddenly face the giant Gila monster’s surprise attacks – first on farm animals, hapless humans, a passing freight train and then a small Indiana town busily preparing for the big Christmas rock ‘n roll dance. The movie is funny and campy with music from the 1950s and vintage automobiles.

“It stars Terrence Knox (*Tour of Duty*, *St. Elsewhere*) as the Sheriff. The handsome Chase is played by Brian Gross (*Red Tails*) who races, then rallies with restless hot-rodder Jesse Janzen as Waco

Bob and seductress Carla, played with a passionate zing by Christina DeRosa as they fight the Giant Gila Monster.

The Gila monster is no longer the federally protected and endangered southwest desert critter thoughtlessly nudged through balsa wood walls in the original movie. Clever EFX and a dangerous man-made chemical spill morph the Gila into a monster and cave crickets

chickens. Tracked down and annoyed by the Sheriff's nitro explosion that supposedly sealed the cave the monster breaks through by morning and wreaks havoc.

Town drunk and civil libertarian Compton, played brilliantly by Rich Komenich, saves the day with a bottle of whisky in one hand and the Second Amendment in the other. His secret stash of machine guns and nitroglycerin – stockpiled to fight Russians or Martians or atomic monsters – has everyone home just in time for Christmas.

Gerald Pauwels plays the classic rich, blowhard Mayor who is forced to face the realities of city leadership as he, the Sheriff, the hot-rodders and town drunk pull together to fight the monster. Actor Don Sullivan who plays hero Chase in the original movie returns as the Scientist.

Gila spit, as we all learned in junior high science and Sullivan reminds us, is bad, but in *Gila!* giant Gila goo dissolves human flesh in wonderful B-movie fashion”.

